

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5542

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AMCONSUL CASABLANCA

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CASABLANCA FOR FISHERIES ATTACHE

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAID, PFOR, EFIS, MR, FR

SUBJECT: FRENCH-MAURITANIAN ECONOMIC DISCUSSIONS

REF.: 75 NOUAKCHOTT 2360

1. MAURITANIAN MINISTER OF STATE FOR NATIONAL ECONOMY, SIDI OULD CHEIKH 'ABDALLAHI, LED DELEGATION TO FIRST SESSION OF FRANCO-MAURITANIAN MIXED COMMISSION HELD IN PARIS APRIL 15 AND 16. ECONOMIC COOPERATION ACCORD SIGNED IN 1973 ESTABLISHED MIXED COMMISSION, WHICH WILL MEET PERIODICALLY IN PARIS AND NOUAKCHOTT. FRENCH SIDE WAS LED BY MINISTER OF COOPERATION JEAN DE LIPKOWSKI. MAURITANIAN MINISTER ALSO MET WITH PRIME MINISTER CHIRAC.

2. UPON HIS RETURN TO NOUAKCHOTT, 'ABDALLAHI GAVE FOLLOWING ACCOUNT OF PARIS SESSION: TO COUNTRIES EXAMINED "PROBLEM" OF FRENCH TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO MAURITANIA AND AGREED TO "STABILIZE" LEVEL OF THIS AID. FRANCE AGREED TO PARTICIPATE IN FINANCING OF NOUAKCHOTT-NEMA ROAD. TWO MINISTERS SIGNED HEALTH CONVENTION FOR YEARS 1976-78, WHICH PROVIDES FOR UNCLASSIFIED

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FRENCH TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND FINANCIAL HELP IN CREATING

MEDICAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND TRAINING MAURITANIAN MEDICAL PERSONNEL. MAURITANIA AND FRANCE ALSO SIGNED FISHING AGREEMENT WHICH SET FORTH CONDITIONS FOR SPECIFIED NUMBER OF FRENCH VESSELS TO FISH FOR SPINY LOBSTER IN MAURITANIAN WATERS. QUESTION OF TONNAGE WAS NOT AGREED UPON ALTHOUGH TWO PARTIES SAID MATTER WOULD BE SETTLED WITHIN NEXT TWO MONTHS.

3. LOOKING TO FUTURE COOPERATION, MINISTER 'ABDALLAHI RAISED THREE AREAS WHERE HE HOPED FRANCE WOULD BE ABLE TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE: (A) LINKING OF NOUAKCHOTT TO UNDERWATER COMMUNICATIONS CABLE NOW DESIGNED TO SERVE FRANCE, MOROCCO, SENEGAL, AND IVORY COAST; (B) CREATION OF UNIVERSITY CENTER IN MAURITANIA. 'ABDALLAHI SAID FRENCH SHOWED CONSIDERABLE INTEREST IN SUPPORTING THIS PROJECT. (FRENCH DIPLOMAT CONFIRMED APRIL 21 THAT FRANCE WILL MOST PROBABLY HELP TO DEVELOP UNIVERSITY CENTER, FIRST OF ITS KIND IN MAURITANIA. DIPLOMAT EXPLAINED THAT MAURITANIAN SECONDARY SCHOOL GRADUATES NOW FIND IT DIFFICULT TO OBTAIN ACCEPTANCE IN OVERSEAS INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING. UNIVERSITY CENTER WILL REDUCE NEED FOR GOING OVERSEAS. ALTHOUGH IT IS ENVISAGED THAT CENTER WILL EVENTUALLY BE FULL-FLEDGED UNIVERSITY, IT WILL BEGIN AS POLYTECHNIC SCHOOL FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL GRADUATES; AND (C) PARTICIPATION IN FINANCING EXPLOITATION OF IRON ORE GUELBS.

4. MINISTER 'ABDALLAHI EMPHASIZED IMPORTANCE OF SENEGAL RIVER DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION (OMVS) AND NOTED THAT FRANCE IS VERY INTERESTED IN SUPPORTING THIS PROGRAM. HE CONCLUDED THAT RESULTS OF MIXED COMMISSION SESSION WERE "EXCELLENT" AND FRANCO-MAURITANIAN RELATIONS ARE "GOOD". 'ABDALLAHI ADDED THAT HE BELIEVES "THERE IS NO AMBIGUITY IN THESE RELATIONS".HANDYSIDE

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